

# PICKENS COUNTY

## Honorable Ira B. Colvin

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## PRIORITY RECOMMENDATIONS

1. All children will have parents who are knowledgeable of good parenting practices, age appropriate supervision and discipline techniques, and parent/child communication skills
2. Counseling programs will be available for children and families for mental health counseling, substance abuse prevention, and crisis counseling services
3. Adults will have employment opportunities to improve their ability to meet the basic needs of their family

# Issues

*Issues are the primary concerns or problems facing children in the county.*

## **Health - Children's (0 - 19)**

physical and mental well-being in the county.

### **Obesity related to inadequate diets**

Policy Council Action Steps:

- work with Board of Education to remove unhealthy snacks from vending machines in schools
- partner with Pickens County Diabetes Prevention Project
- conduct health screenings with appropriate follow-up and educational programs in schools

### **Teen pregnancy**

Policy Council Action Steps:

- seek funding for grants to provide abstinence based programs
- provide speakers bureau for sexual responsibility, STD prevention and other concerns
- sponsor yearly Teen Expo for Prevention of Teen Pregnancy

### **Non-compliance with children's special health care needs**

Policy Council Action Steps:

- implement staffing and review committee ages 5-21
- involve School Nurse to encourage screenings
- re-examine guidelines for Medicaid requirements or sanctions to parents

## **Safety - Children live free of abuse, neglect, crime, and drugs.**

### **Drug abuse/alcohol use among minors**

Policy Council Action Steps:

- implement alcohol and other drugs prevention and intervention programs
- provide Drug Education in schools
- continue to fund drug abuse prevention programs

### **Transportation concerns**

Policy Council Action Steps:

- encourage seat belt use through education and media
- seat belt compliance checks by local police departments
- involve local youth organizations to provide volunteer transportation to and from sports events to prevent lack of adult supervision for children walking to/from events

### **Youth aggression and violence**

Policy Council Action Steps:

- encourage funding of programs to prevent violence and bullying
- provide conflict resolution training for students, educators, and parents
- support local Safe and Drug Free Schools & Communities programs through the schools and Pickens County Family Resource Center

## **Education - Children**

learn the skills necessary to become productive citizens.

### **Mentoring (adult and peer)**

Policy Council Action Steps:

- support funding for after school programs
- referrals from social services agencies to after-school programs
- secure transportation to and from programs for youth

### **Tutoring and academic after school programs**

Policy Council Action Steps:

- support funding for programs
- provide referrals for students needing assistance
- assist in identifying volunteers for programs

### **Adult education programs**

Policy Council Action Steps:

- contact legislators about continued funds for Adult Education/GED
- publicize the availability of services in the county
- provide funds for AIDT, FTT, and/or Workforce development programs

## Early Care and

**Education** - Children (0 – 5) are provided opportunities to fully develop emotionally, socially, physically, and cognitively and are ready to succeed.

### Parenting programs

Policy Council Action Steps:

- encourage use of science based materials in parent education programs
- apprise public and service agencies of availability of programs
- develop plan to address barriers to attendance: transportation and childcare

### Daycare/night care

Policy Council Action Steps:

- identify areas in county with greatest need for child care centers
- encourage day/night care operators as a career opportunity
- additional funds to provide childcare subsidies to low income parents

### Prenatal care/delivery

Policy Council Action Steps:

- reinstate services/programs to the Public Health Department for prenatal care
- incentives and encouragement to physicians to practice in rural areas
- work with Pickens County Medical Center/DCH to reinstate delivery services in Pickens County

## Economic Security

- Children grow up in a financially stable home where the child's basic needs can be met.

### Lack of jobs in Pickens County

Policy Council Action Steps:

- fund workforce development programs, (AIDT, FIT, Workforce Investment Act programs)
- support West Alabama Economic Development Association, Pickens County Industrial Development Authority in securing business and industry
- emphasize career education in the schools

### Adult literacy

Policy Council Action Steps:

- support and fund adult literacy programs
- support and fund resources for libraries
- publicize adult literacy programs available in the county

### Encouraging two parent homes

Policy Council Action Steps:

- include more family/relational skills training in school curriculum
- lobby for tax incentives to keep families intact
- involve church pastors and leaders in efforts

## Parent Involvement and Skills

- Parents and guardians participation and effectiveness in fostering an environment for children to become mature, responsible and independent adults.

### Family counseling

Policy Council Action Steps:

- encourage Indian Rivers Mental Health to employ a youth counselor and/or recruit private counseling providers for Pickens County
- organize transportation system to provide transportation to sessions
- mandate counseling (substance abuse, crisis, and other) as needed through court order for families involved in court system

### Parent involvement in school activities

Policy Council Action Steps:

- help parents be proactive by interacting in the school system through volunteering
- community service for parents of youth who were adjudicated in the court system
- provide parent education classes

### Early parent involvement with children

Policy Council Action Steps:

- secure programs to improve literacy skills for parents
- support programs available in county: Begin Education Early and Dollar General Literacy program at PC Family Resource Center

## Policy Recommendation

1. Re-evaluate services provided through the Public Health Department (i.e. prenatal care, teen pregnancy prevention efforts)
2. Funding for adult education, literacy, and workforce development
3. Funding for Children's Trust Fund program
4. Continued emphasis on locating industries in Alabama

